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Talk— But Not In Moscow

It is bad enough to have members of Congress writing each other notes on a magic slate. It is surrealistic that the U.S. secretary of state should travel to Moscow on schedule, in the wake of a major espionage scandal, and operate from a Winnebago while pursuing critical discussions on major arms reductions.

Governments are sometimes reluctant to make instances of espionage public because they believe that once spying is revealed, it will be necessary to react to it—and the timing may not be convenient. George Shultz suffers from no such compunctions. The whole world knows the Soviet government has seduced our soldiers and bugged our quarters, our typewriters, our scramblers, our bubble and our new embassy. The world knows that Soviet negotiators out-negotiated their U.S. counterparts about where our respective embassies should be located, how they should be constructed and by whom.

Let me be clear. I support U.S.-Soviet discussions on intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe, and I see no objection to the United States and the Soviet Union removing their missiles from Europe, providing the deal does not jeopardize our allies' security and can be verified.

But it seems to me extraordinary that the United States should be—and should appear to be—so eager for discussions that we are ready to accept any site and any circumstances.

It was bad enough when we accepted Reykjavik in the wake of Nicholas Daniloff's framing. We have already de-linked arms talks from the continuing Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. We have de-linked arms talks from Soviet emigration policy and human rights practices. Neither de-linking was unreasonable, since mutually verifiable arms reductions are a good in themselves.

However, is it reasonable to undertake critical talks at this time in a place where it has just been demonstrated that we are subject to total surveillance? Is it appropriate to accept for our representatives the lack of privacy imposed on subjects in a totalitarian state? How can the State Department even seem serious about security if our top officials so quickly accept and adapt to these conditions?

Arms control agreements do not require a high level of mutual trust, since meticulous verification procedures should be built into the agreements. But they require a common goal: a degree of mutual commitment to the terms of the agreement and a disposition to deal fairly. It is very important that we make it clear—at this time and under this provocation—that we do not accept cheating as a normal part of the process of dealing with one another on this important matter, and that decent quarters are a requirement for the discussion of serious issues.

We should insist on moving the talks to some neutral site, where our officials could speak to one another without eavesdropping. Soviet leaders will agree to such a request if they are interested in pursuing the talks. (If they are not, we will not get an acceptable agreement in any case.) Surely, we could not accept as a precondition for the talks that they be conducted from our "captured" embassy in Moscow.

Unfortunately, the Soviet penetration of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow is not an isolated case. The expulsion of Soviet agents from France has taken place simultaneously with the revelations concerning U.S. Marine guards. Both events follow the expulsion last year of identified KGB agents at the Soviet U.N. mission in New York. The Wall Street Journal reminded us that the most recent episode is part of a persistent pattern of Soviet efforts to penetrate the U.S. Embassy in Moscow and a persistent pattern of inadequate American responses.

Now that the current Moscow scandal has again raised the issue, we should also consider some other very strange and unequal agreements and practices tolerated in the name of diplomatic immunity.

It is true, as Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) noted last week, "Their embassy is sitting on Mt. Alto here in Washington and has antennas going to the Pentagon, the White House, the Treasury, the CIA and everything else. Our new embassy

is in a swamp. It is surrounded by buildings controlled by the KGB." In Washington, the Soviets occupy many times the space allotted to the United States in Moscow.

But even worse is the fact that the new Soviet embassy in Washington is only one of a number of Eastern bloc embassies and consuls in this country whose "diplomatic" activities include systematic electronic spying. Neither diplomatic privileges nor the traditions of an open society require tolerating institutionalized espionage. The president's announcement that Soviet officials will not be permitted to move into their new Washington embassy "until a simultaneous move by both countries is possible" helps, but it doesn't help enough.

Thirty years have passed since George Kennan suggested we might "reasonably and justly" look forward to a Soviet government that would be "reasonable, tolerant, communicative and forthright in its relations with other states and peoples." This is what we all hope Mikhail Gorbachev and the new generation of Soviet leaders will be. But accepting ignominious conditions for negotiations neither encourages the development of more forthright Soviet behavior nor is it compatible with our national dignity and interests.

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